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Testimony of Ray Winicki, M.D.  
On March 6, 2020  
In the Public Health Committee

HB 5020 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH.

Good afternoon, Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg and the many distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. For the record my name is Ray Winicki, M.D. I am a board certified otolaryngologist practicing in Waterbury, CT and I am a former president of the CT ENT. I am here today in **strong support** of the vaping language included in HB5020, representing over 1000 M.D.s in the above medical specialty societies.

I will not burden this committee with prior testimony from SB244 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS BY HEALTH CARE FACILITIES AND PHARMACIES, but will thank the proposers of this bill, including the Governor for the strength and long term impact this bill will hopefully have in protecting our youth. The stiff monetary penalties on page 12 Sec. 6. Subsection (b) are appropriate and necessary if we are to successfully dissuade adults from purchasing such products for our impressionable youth population.

It is hard to believe that adults - even parents - are purchasing vaping products for their children but investigative reporting has shown this to be true! The CDC said that:

- Nearly 5% of middle schoolers reported using an e-cigarette within a 30-day period, according to a CBS News report.
- For high schoolers, that number was more than 20%.
- In 2019, the CDC said that e-cigarettes are unsafe for kids, teens, and young adults, and the incidence of students trying vaping continues to increase rapidly. Availability of e-cigarettes is creating a new group of addicts.

[10.5% of middle schoolers reported using an e-cig within a 30-day period this year.](#)  
[27.5% of high schoolers said the same.](#)



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Opponents of this bill will undoubtedly say that it will not stop all middle or high schoolers from obtaining these products, and they may be right, but it will also dissuade many.

A key component of this effort to stop kids from vaping will be in education. This will need to come from many sources and it will need to come often. Teachers, parents, health care providers and leaders in our community need to show kids the dangers of vape and e-cig product use including lung injury, the deleterious effects on the developing adolescent brain, and potential for nicotine addiction.

Thank you for your consideration on SB 5020 and we urge the passing of this important piece of legislation.